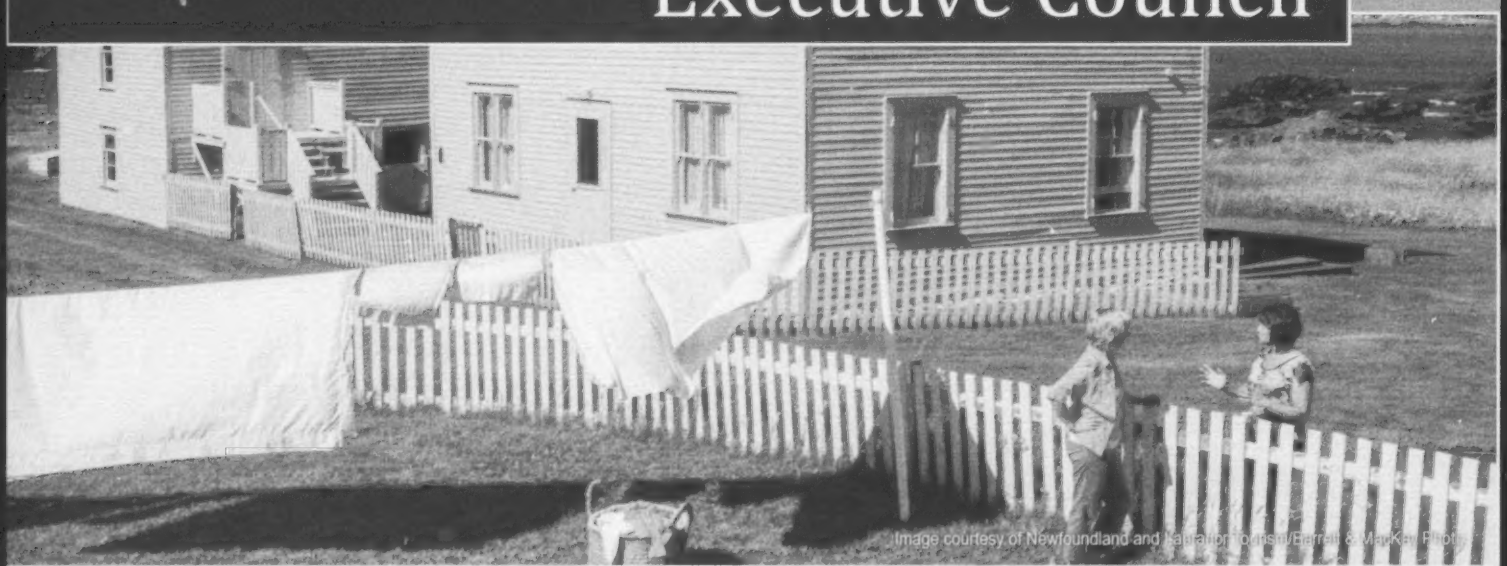
2014-15

Office of Public Engagement
Executive Council



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Annual Report

Newfoundland Labrador

Message from the Minister

As Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement, and in accordance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to accountability, I am pleased to submit the Office of Public Engagement's 2014-15 Annual Report.

This report describes progress of the Office of Public Engagement during the last year within key areas of its mandate: Open Government, Public Engagement, Youth Engagement, Collaborative Processes, and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy.

The Office worked with many other Government entities on the design and delivery of public engagement activities during this period, most notably the Premier's Health Summit. Other major consultations included the Lands Act Review and Phase 1 of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Further collaborative work is detailed below.

Youth engagement remains a high priority, with the launch of a new Civic Engagement stream for the Getting the Message out Program, and the reactivation of the Premier's Youth Advisory Committee.

The Office is responsible for the administration of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. An independent committee reviewing this legislation provided recommendations to Government towards the end of the fiscal year, all of which were accepted. Extensive work then began on implementing those recommendations.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all staff, and thank them for their efforts and commitment in helping to move the Office's mandate forward. As Minister, I look forward to building upon these efforts in 2015-16.

The Office of Public Engagement will continue working with internal and external partners to enhance dialogue and collaboration and to better connect Government with residents.

As the Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement, I am accountable for the accomplishments reported in this document. This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

Sincerely,

Steve Kent, MHA
Minister Responsible for the Office of Public Engagement

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1. Introduction

The work of the OPE reflects the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's broad commitment to open government. The OPE will help government to support a vibrant and prosperous province where citizens, stakeholders, community agencies and academic institutions are supported and encouraged to work together with government, to benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In support of its mandate, the OPE undertakes activities and initiatives related to public engagement. collaboration, research and evaluation, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act*. The OPE also supports the Provincial Council and Regional Councils of the former Rural Secretariat.

Additionally, the OPE works to advance the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to open government. Through the Open Government Initiative (OGI), Government has committed to listening to and involving citizens and stakeholders in new and innovative ways, as well as changing the way it does business. This includes a commitment to improve access to information and data; provide meaningful opportunities for dialogue with the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador; and to bring government, partners, organizations and communities together through collaborative efforts. For more information on the OGI, please visit the website (http://open.gov.nl.ca).

As of March 31, 2015, the work of the OPE was delivered with a staff complement of 35 positions; 25 female, nine male and one vacancy.

Twenty-five positions were located in St. John's and the remaining ten positions were located across the province in Carbonear, Placentia, Bonavista, Burin, New-Wes-Valley, Springdale, Corner Brook, Stephenville, Roddickton and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Most of these offices are co-located with the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development or the College of the North Atlantic.

To accomplish its mandate the OPE spent just over $7.4 million in 2014-15. A financial summary is provided in Section 8 of this report.

The OPE has been successful in supporting its mandate through its open government and public engagement work. This report highlights the key accomplishments of the OPE in 2014-15.

2. Mandate

The Office of Public Engagement is mandated to:

- create, support and deliver meaningful dialogue and public engagement opportunities that build capacity consistent with leading practices in this field in order to better connect the people of the province to their government;
- conduct and support research and evaluation activities to inform government policy and decision-making processes;
- work with internal and external partners to identify, build and support effective collaborative processes to address public policy issues and issues of common interest to special interest groups, community, business, labour and government sectors;
- administer and coordinate the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and promoting new and innovative government-wide proactive disclosure of information and data policies and practices that are informed by the citizens and stakeholders of the province; and
- administer the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act*, including regulations approved under the Act.

3. Lines of Business

The OPE operates within the following lines of business:

Dialogue: The OPE demonstrates to the public and the public service best practices in public engagement through the development and implementation of effective engagement and dialogue that include the youth, community, business, labour and academic sectors, as well as the Provincial Council and the Regional Councils. Additionally, in keeping with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commitment to open government, the OPE is available to support government entities, advisory councils, regional groups, community organizations and stakeholders across all sectors in the design and delivery of their own public engagement initiatives.

Collaboration and Partnership Support: The OPE recognizes that all forms of collaboration, including partnerships, are an important form of high-level engagement. The OPE works to support and participates in various existing collaborative efforts such as those involving the business and labour sectors, and the citizen-based, voluntary Provincial and Regional Councils. The OPE also helps convene and provide partnership-brokering support (both internally and externally) to new collaborative efforts such as networks or alliances.

Research and Evaluation: The OPE supports and partners with government entities, academic institutions, and other partners and stakeholders on collaborative research efforts that are integral to understanding issues of importance to regions and the province as a whole. The OPE supports, convenes and partners in relevant evaluation activities with an emphasis on approaches that directly involve multiple stakeholders. The OPE is also responsible for the implementation of the Rural Lens, an analytical tool used by government departments to assess the rural implications of proposed policies and decisions.

Access to Information and Data and Protection of Privacy: The OPE is responsible for the overall administration and coordination of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as well as for promoting and supporting the proactive disclosure of information and data by departments. Administering the Act includes ensuring statutory requirements such as annual reports and legislative reviews are completed; collecting and maintaining statistics on access to information requests; providing guidance, assistance, training and advice on the application and interpretation of the Act to public bodies; assisting public bodies with the implementation of the appropriate privacy breach protocol where necessary; and providing leadership with regard to the proactive disclosure of information and data, including policy development, liaising with departments to facilitate the online posting of information, and maintenance of the Open Information and Open Data webpages.

Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act: The OPE administers this Act and performs all necessary activities to carry out the requirements of its role respecting the legislation, including designing and delivering information and awareness sessions for key stakeholders and public bodies that are affected by the Act and working in partnership with the Office of the Citizens' Representative and the Labour Relations Board to ensure its effective implementation.

4. Vision

The vision of the OPE is excellence in public engagement and open government.

Excellence in public engagement will foster a vibrant and prosperous province where citizens and a variety of stakeholder groups, community agencies and academic institutions are supported and encouraged to work together and with government, to benefit the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Excellence in open government will lead to informed and engaged citizens, increased opportunities for the public to participate in government policy and decision making in a meaningful way, and enhanced collaboration among government, stakeholders and citizens.

5. Report on Performance

Issue 1: Public Engagement

The OPE designs and develops innovative public consultation processes to increase government's engagement with communities, labour, business and community sector partners, as wells as other stakeholders and the general public. This past year, the OPE has explored new ways to increase participation in engagement activities and has continued to support departments and community organizations in their engagement efforts. Youth engagement has been a priority for the OPE this past year, particularly with the introduction of the civic engagement stream to the Getting the Message Out (GMO) program and the reactivation of the Youth Advisory Committee (details in Section 8 below).

The indicators and accomplishments below align with government's strategic direction (Appendix A) and contribute to the dialogue and collaboration focus areas of this direction.

Goal: *By March 31, 2017, the Office of Public Engagement will have undertaken initiatives to strengthen public engagement capacity within government and across other sectors.*

2014-15 Objective: By March 31, 2015, the Office of Public Engagement will have initiated activities to increase capacity to support and deliver innovative public engagement efforts.

2014-15 Measure: Initiated activities to increase capacity to support and deliver innovative public engagement efforts.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Explored new public engagement tools and techniques (i.e., social media, online engagement)	The OPE researched a variety of engagement tools and techniques which could be employed to improve engagement efforts, increase participation and reach a wider population. • Dialogue App: an idea-generation tool that can be used to offer suggestions and ideas on a given question and comment on or rate other ideas; • Zoomph: a tool for displaying social media activity on a big screen at an event, providing a live narrative of the event and fostering a sense of inclusion as ideas and comments are immediately shared with all in attendance; • Storify: a tool for curating social media content into a readable timeline. It can be used following an event to provide an event narrative to someone who was unable to participate (i.e., tells the "story" of the event);

	• EventBrite: a ticketing application used to manage events and allow individuals to self-register, thereby reducing the workload on staff. • Instagram: a social media tool used primarily for sharing pictures; • Online surveys; and • Input and Ideas forms.
Increased use of technology for public engagement initiatives	By incorporating some of the above noted tools and techniques, the OPE was able to increase its use of technology for public engagement initiatives. • In January 2015, the OPE created an Instagram account to post about youth-related activities. For example, the Getting the Message Out (GMO) team encourages students to follow and tag OPE in their picture submissions in exchange for an extra ballot in the GMO prize draws. • The Open Government engagement process used keypad polling at engagement events and Google Docs to theme data. In-person engagement events were supplemented with a variety of online tools, including surveys and an Input and Ideas form. Once the engagement process was completed, staff used NVivo to organize and analyze the data collected from the surveys and engagement sessions. • The Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) and the OPE collaborated to design and deliver 13 Health Forums across the province and the Premier's Health Summit (January 14, 2015). o The 13 forums used EventBrite to manage registration and incorporated polling technology and Google Docs; o When designing the Premier's Health Summit, the OPE and HCS consulted the Disability Policy Office on using appropriate adaptive technologies. Closed captioning and assistive listening devices ensured that everyone in the room had an equal opportunity to participant in the event. In addition to the adaptive technologies, the Dialogue App, Zoomph, Storify, polling technology, Google Docs and a series of video vignettes were used. • The Dialogue App was also launched on February 23, 2015 in support of the Pre-Budget Consultations process. OPE worked with Finance on the content of the app, operated the Dialogue App during the consultation process and monitored submissions as necessary. The App will be available until the Budget is announced.

Provided guidance and advisory services with respect to the design and/or delivery of public engagement activities	The OPE provided advice, guidance and support to several departments and community organizations in 2014-15, such as: • HCS on the design and delivery of 13 health forums on primary healthcare and the Premier's Health Summit; • Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs on the design and delivery of nine dialogue sessions as part of the Lands Act Review; • Seniors, Wellness and Social Development on the design and delivery of eight dialogue sessions held across the province between January and February 2014. Sessions focused on Phase One of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and targeted a variety of stakeholders throughout the province. Further to these, the OPE assisted in the design and delivery of the final Summit which was held on March 11, 2015. The purpose of the Summit was to share the findings of the eight sessions and to build consensus on priorities and actions for the next PRS Action Plan. • The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation on the design and delivery of a multi-site, multi-stakeholder session. This session used a deliberative dialogue approach complemented by polling questions to gather input on the Provincial Social Housing Plan. • Clarenville Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors on the design and delivery of three engagement sessions. These sessions were held between September 2014 and January 2015 and provided members of the Chamber of Commerce to discuss membership priorities and identify opportunities. • Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse on the design and delivery the Elder Abuse Conference. In an effort to increase participation and interaction at the event, OPE staff assisted with the use of polling questions during keynote presentations and the inclusion of table discussions. OPE staff were also on-site to provide technical support and provide an overview of the major themes coming out of the discussions.
Formally recognized excellence in public engagement practice within the public service and across other sectors, where appropriate	In the January 2015 edition of the Policy Excellence Newsletter (PEN), the OPE submitted a feature article recognizing HCS for their excellence in public engagement. The PEN is an initiative of the Policy Innovation and Accountability Office (PIAO), is published several times a year

	and is circulated to policy professionals within government as well as externally.
Distributed materials related to public engagement (i.e., the Public Engagement Guide)	The OPE developed a Public Engagement Guide to help departments implement successful public engagement processes. It outlines how public engagement can be used, when it should be used and whom it can typically involve. It seeks to provide a starting point from which those considering engaging the public may quickly acquire the basic knowledge required to design, conduct, and evaluate engagement activities. A draft of the guide was circulated to departments for review and feedback, finalized and posted online: http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/OPE_PEGuide.pdf Further to this, in collaboration with the Centre for Learning and Development, a Public Engagement Fundamentals course and related learning materials were developed and made available to members of the Public Service Network.
Piloted, assessed and implemented a new civic engagement stream in the Getting the Message Out program	In consultation with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the OPE developed and piloted a civic engagement stream for the GMO program. The civic engagement stream includes a presentation which aims educate young people in the province about civic engagement and what it means to be an active citizen. The presentation defines civic engagement and active citizenship, profiles young people from across NL who are active citizens at multiple levels – locally, provincially, nationally and internationally and provides students with resources and tools to assist them in becoming more engaged in their community. Thirty-four civic engagement presentations were delivered in seven schools across the Northeast Avalon region during the week of April 14-18, 2014. A total of 863 students viewed the pilot presentation. Three surveys were developed and used to assess the new civic engagement stream: pre- and post-surveys for students and one for teachers. Overall, the new civic engagement stream was extremely well received by students and teachers. However, the GMO students responsible for delivering the pilot proposed a number of improvements based on their experience and the survey results. These recommendations were presented to the Minister Responsible for the OPE in December 2014 and all recommendations were accepted. The civic engagement stream was implemented in September 2014. GMO students delivered 29 civic

	engagement presentations in the fall of 2014 and 80 in the winter of 2015.

Discussion of Results:

The OPE researched and piloted several new engagement tools and techniques this year to increase access to and participation in engagement events and initiatives. The Office continues to support government entities, partners and stakeholders to ensure consultation processes are inclusive, engaging and appropriate to the need. Supporting others to enhance their existing and future engagement activities is critical to achieving the OPE mandate. In an effort to promote meaningful engagement, the OPE has developed learning resources, such as the Public Engagement Guide, and will continue to find ways to recognize and highlight excellence in public engagement practice across the public sector. Finally, the OPE recognizes the value of the province's youth and their voice. The new civic engagement stream of the GMO program aims to inspire students to become active citizens and more engaged in things they are passionate about.

2015-16 Objective:

By March 31, 2016, the Office of Public Engagement will have undertaken initiatives through the Open Government public engagement process to identify new capacity requirements and ways in which to better engage our external partners.

2015-16 Measure:

Undertaken initiatives through the Open Government public engagement process to identify new capacity requirements and ways to better engage our external partners.

Indicators:

1. Developed and implemented a Collaboration Incentive Fund which will build capacity for multi-sector collaboration;
2. Developed tools such as a community-based research guide to support stakeholders and departments in creating and harnessing locally generated knowledge for the benefit of public policy and government decision making.

Issue 2: Open Government

The OPE is mandated to promote and advance open government in the province. Significant work was completed this year on the OGI, which was launched in March 2014. The OPE led a comprehensive public engagement process across the province to engage citizens, stakeholders and other government departments in a dialogue about open government and to gather information for the development of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's first Open Government Action Plan.

Furthermore, the OPE oversaw the statutory review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* in 2014-15 by an independent review committee. This committee carried out a comprehensive public consultation process while conducting an extensive review of the Act. The review committee submitted its final report to Government on March 2, 2015. Government accepted all the recommendations and took immediate steps toward implementation, including the elimination of the access to information application fee. The work of the review committee and Government's acceptance of all recommendations is helping create the culture of openness within government and across society that is essential to the success of the OGI.

The indicators and accomplishments below align with government's strategic direction (Appendix A) and contribute to all focus areas.

Goal:
By March 31, 2017, the Office of Public Engagement will have undertaken initiatives to ensure citizens have increased access to the information, data and dialogue opportunities they need for meaningful participation in the development of Newfoundland and Labrador.

2014-15 Objective:
By March 31, 2015, the Office of Public Engagement will have developed and released an Open Government Action Plan that has been co-created with citizens and stakeholders.

2014-15 Measure:
Developed and released an Open Government Action Plan that has been co-created with citizens and stakeholders.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Provided learning and awareness-building opportunities for the public and internal/external stakeholders related to the pillars of open government	Between April and October 2014, 10 information sessions were held across the province to familiarize both citizens and government employees on the OGI and its four pillars (open data, open information, dialogue and collaboration). A total of 255 individuals attended these sessions.
Designed and delivered in-person and online engagement activities to inform the Open Government Action Plan	As part of the OGI launch in March 2014, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to undertake an extensive public engagement process to inform the development of its first open government action plan. The OPE designed and delivered 42 in-person engagement sessions, which resulted in more than 700 participants providing their input and ideas. A *What we Heard* document was prepared and is available online at: http://open.gov.nl.ca/dialogue/pdf/OGIWhatWeHeard.pdf

Developed a draft Open Government Action Plan based on information and feedback gathered	A draft Action Plan was prepared based on the extensive public engagement process that was carried out between May and October 2014 and a jurisdictional scan of best practices.
Draft plan was released for further public feedback	OPE reports a variance for this indicator as the Action Plan was not released for public feedback in 2014-15. It was expected that the Report of the Review Committee responsible for the Statutory Review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* would contain information and recommendations critical to the development of the Open Government Action Plan. The Review Report was anticipated to be released in October 2014, however, it was not formally released until March 3, 2015. The OPE immediately undertook analysis and implementation of the Report's recommendations with a view to embedding the results into the Open Government Action Plan before releasing it. The OPE was not able to complete this work by March 31, 2015.
Announced/launched the Open Government Action Plan	OPE reports a variance for this indicator for reasons described above.

Discussion of Results:

Following the launch of the OGI in March 2015, the OPE led a comprehensive public engagement process across the province; engaging citizens, stakeholders and other government departments in a dialogue about open government and gathering relevant information to inform the Action Plan. Once the engagement process was complete, the OPE analyzed the information received through all sources (i.e., in-person engagement events, online submissions and surveys), considered best practices in open government across the globe and created an Action Plan reflective of what we heard. The work of the ATIPPA review committee and Government's acceptance of all recommendations is helping to create a culture of openness within government and across the province which is essential to the success of the OGI. For that reason, the OPE felt it was critical to incorporate the review committee's findings into the Action Plan. Work continues on the OGI and the Action Plan which is expected to be released and announced in 2015-16.

2015-16 Objective:

By March 31, 2016, the Office of Public Engagement will have expanded the amount of information and data available to the public through its proactive disclosure policy.

2015-16 Measure:

Expanded the amount of information and data available to the public through its proactive disclosure policy.

Indicators:

1. Developed proactive disclosure guidelines and distribute to departments to assist them in releasing information;
2. Developed and shared open data guidelines to support departments in releasing data in re-usable and machine readable formats;
3. Supported departments in identifying and preparing information and data for proactive disclosure;
4. Tracked and reported on the number of proactive disclosures by departments.

6. Additional Highlights

In addition to the points raised in Section Five, the following additional highlights are worthy of mention and are consistent with the OPE's strategic direction and mandate.

ATIPPA Review

During the 2014-15 fiscal year the *ATIPP Act* was reviewed by an independent review committee. On March 2, 2015 the ATIPPA review committee submitted its report to government. During the month of March, the ATIPP Office, along with a Transition Team, began developing new policies and training material and undertook analysis to implement the 90 recommendations made by the review committee. The committee's report can be found on the ATIPP Office website at: http://www.atipp.gov.nl.ca/publications/index.html.

Submission to the ATIPPA Review

In August, 2014, the OPE submitted and presented Government's report to the ATIPPA review committee. The report provided an overview of the administration of the Act and a statistical analysis of various topics, such as timelines and the use of exceptions. A copy of this report can be found at:
http://www.parcnl.ca/documents/gnl_brief_to_parc_aug_15_2014.pdf,
A copy of the transcript from the OPE's presentation can be found at: http://www.parcnl.ca/documents/honourable_sandy_collins_august_19_2014.pdf.

Early Implementation of key recommendations from the ATIPPA Review Committee

Some key recommendations made by the statutory review committee were implemented through policy in March 2015. These include:

- Updating the Cost Schedule to remove the $5 application fee, reduce what public bodies can charge applicants for, and increase the number of free hours for an applicant from 4 hour to 10 for municipalities and 15 for other public bodies;
- Establishing a toll-free help desk within the ATIPP Office to provide support and advice to municipalities and other public bodies;
- Modifying government practices to protect the identity of an applicant throughout the request process to ensure that the type of applicant is not recorded until a request is completed; and

- Requiring government departments to report privacy breaches to OPE and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Development of a Guide for Municipalities

In 2014-15 the ATIPP Office developed a Guide for Municipalities to accompany the Access and Privacy Policy and Procedures Manuals. This Guide is intended to provide a general overview of access and privacy, as well as guidance on issues specific to municipalities, such as the protection of personal information in tabled council meeting records and minutes.

ATIPP Training and Support

Part of the ATIPP Office's mandate is to provide guidance and assistance to public bodies that are subject to the ATIPP Act. One of the ways that the ATIPP Office does this is through access and privacy training and presentations with public bodies (e.g., ATIPP Coordinator training, general access and privacy training, employee onboarding and Communities of Practice). During the 2014-15 fiscal year, the ATIPP Office completed 35 training sessions with government departments, agencies and other public bodies.

Open Information

Over the last year the ATIPP Office has worked with government departments to continue to identify information that can be proactively disclosed. During the 2014-15 fiscal year, over 100 proactive disclosures were made by government departments. A list of proactive disclosures can be found on the Open Information webpage at:
http://www.open.gov.nl.ca/information/default.html.

Premier's Youth Advisory Committee

In November 2014, the Minister Responsible for the OPE, announced a call for applications to help form the new Premier's Youth Advisory Committee. Seventy-one applications were received from across the province and 23 individuals were selected, representing regional, gender, age and ethnic diversity. The Committee has met and began working on its 2015-17 Activity Plan, which will be available online at:
http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/publications/index.html

URock 2014

The 2014 URock Awards were held at The Rooms on May 15, 2014. Eight awards were presented to youth and youth-based organizations for their outstanding volunteer contributions. The 2014 recipients were Corner Brook Regional High Pride Alliance, Richard Churchill of Clarenville, Raylene Mackey of Goulds, Natasha Noel of St. John's, Melissa Thomas of Mount Pearl, Fallon Piercey of Conception Bay, Donald Slaney of St. Lawrence, and Chanelle Cluett of Wabush. The show was hosted by local comedian Matt Wright and featured performances by City on the Coast, East of Empire and West Street Children. Recipients of the award each received a custom-designed electric guitar. For more information about the URock Volunteer Awards, please visit the website (www.urockvolunteerawards.ca).

Social Enterprise

In fiscal year 2014-15, the OPE convened three meetings with important social enterprise stakeholders, representatives from key government departments (such as Advanced Education and Skills; Finance; ServiceNL; Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs; Child, Youth and Family Services; Health and Community Services; Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development; Seniors, Wellness and Social Development; and Executive Council – Policy Innovation and Accountability Office) and stakeholders from the community. Discussions focused on identifying existing Provincial Government social enterprise-related policy and programs, as well as barriers to social enterprise development in the province. Stakeholders will continue to work together to further encourage social enterprise development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Volunteer Week

Volunteer Week was celebrated from April 6-12, 2014 with the theme of "...For the Health of it!". The OPE spearheaded a number of initiatives including the distribution of volunteer breakfast grants to volunteer first responders (delivered in partnership with the Community Sector Council) and the distribution of Volunteer Week grants to organizations throughout the province. The OPE also participated in various community events recognizing Volunteer Week, including a reception at Government House.

Engagement Activities

The OPE's engagement activities in 2014-15 included 41 unique projects, 72 sessions and events, and over 2,700 participants. The OPE provided engagement expertise to community or stakeholder-led initiatives, such as the October 2014, Elder Abuse Conference by the Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and an interactive session involving over 40 youth which examined issues related to cyberbullying.

Regional Activities

In addition to supporting the work of nine Regional Councils and a Provincial Council, regional staff also support and led numerous projects and initiatives in their respective regions. Many of these have been referenced in this report (e.g., volunteer week activities, community-based research projects, engagement activities). Regional staff assist and support community and academic partners in their engagement efforts and provide partnership brokering support to new collaborative efforts and initiatives. For example, an initiative is currently underway in central Newfoundland to examine potential synergies among the community sector, volunteer organizations and youth with a view to identifying needs and strengthening connections for the mutual benefit of local youth and voluntary sector groups. A multi-sectoral steering committee, supported by the OPE's regional planner for the Gander-New-Wes-Valley region, has completed a jurisdictional review and carried out several public engagement activities. The group is now in the process of determining how to move forward into 2015-16.

Collaborative Community-Based Research (CBR)

CBR is often used to inform policy advice submitted to the provincial government by the Provincial and Regional Councils. Three Regional Council-led CBR projects were designed, funded, monitored, and supported by OPE in 2014-15:

- Assessing Factors Impacting the Sustainability of the Clarenville-Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region, Phase 2 . This report is available online at: http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/cbr_reports/34bAssessingtheFactorsImpactingtheSustainabilityoftheClarenville-BonavistaRegion_Phase2.pdf;
- Settlement opportunities for newcomers in Labrador West: What are the gaps in services? This report is available online at: http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/cbr_reports/35.MullingsandAndersonFinalReport-LabWestProject.pdf; and
- Solutions for enhanced access to healthcare in the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour and Stephenville-Port aux Basques regions: An Examination of Nurse Practitioner Models of Care. This report is available online at: http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/EnhancedHealthcareAccessJune24.pdf.

*For a full listing of CBR projects and reports please visit: http://www.ope.gov.nl.ca/rural/whatweredoing/research.html

Grants to Youth Organizations

Each year, the Grants to Youth Organizations program supports a broad range of youth-based initiatives, youth centres and youth leadership entities to develop and deliver activities related to self-reliance, leadership and citizen development. These grants:

- Address an identified need within the community or region;
- Effectively engage youth and youth-serving agencies; and
- Enable the sponsoring agency to develop stronger collaborative relationships within the community and with regional partners.

There were 39 grants approved in 2014-15 with a total value of about $744,000.

Community Youth Networks (CYNs)

The OPE continues to support 34 CYNs in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Office of Public Engagement's (OPE) annual budget for the CYNs is approximately $2.5 M.

In partnership with AES, there were 54 year-round student work and service placements (SWASP) issued under the CYN Work Experience Program and 35 summer SWASP placements allocated for 2014-15. In total, since 2006, there have been approximately 385 year-round student work and service placements issued and approximately 289 student summer placements have been allocated.

The Youth Engagement Division of OPE is collaborating with CYNs, the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL), to develop a Youth Engagement Strategy for municipalities. This initiative stems from information gathered at OPE-supported youth sessions and a CYN Youth Conference/MNL Annual General Meeting held in Corner Brook in the fall of 2014.

7. Opportunities and Challenges

The upcoming fiscal year will present a number of opportunities and challenges for OPE to navigate as it delivers on its mandate.

Open Government

As the lead entity for the Open Government Initiative, the OPE plays an integral role in advancing open government principles. This offers an opportunity for the OPE to further government's commitment to transparency and accountability by ensuring that actions related to the four Open Government pillars of open information, open data, dialogue and collaboration are developed and implemented. Open Government entails a fundamental cultural shift within government. The OPE recognizes the challenges that are inherent in any culture change process and has therefore identified actions for possible inclusion in the draft Open Government Action Plan to facilitate this cultural transformation.

Technology and Public Engagement

The rapid evolution of information and communications technology continues to have an impact on public engagement work. As innovation in this field presents numerous opportunities to increase the quality of and participation in public engagement, the OPE continually monitors such developments to uncover new ways to dialogue with the public. However, the speed at which new technologies emerge and old technologies become obsolete presents a challenge when determining which technological innovations are to be integrated into the OPE's public engagement work.

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

The report of the Statutory Review Committee on the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* was released in March, 2015 and made numerous recommendations – which Government accepted in their entirety – to make Newfoundland and Labrador a national leader in access to information and the protection of privacy legislation. Implementation of the recommendations, including the adoption of new legislation, provides this province with an opportunity to facilitate democracy through increased access to information within the public sector. In addition, the new Act contains numerous provisions that enhance the protection of individuals' privacy. In turn, this will result in increased trust in public institutions as custodians of confidential and personal information.

8. Financial Summary

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are unaudited and based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015. Audited financial statements are a requirement at the government level and are made public through the Public Accounts process; however, the OPE is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

Executive Support	Department Original Budget 2014-15	Amended 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
Salaries	417,000	395,600	395,532
Employee Benefits	2,600	700	626
Travel & Communication	58,400	19,400	8,041
Supplies	9,100	18,000	17,853
Professional Services	0	0	0
Purchased Services	53,900	50,900	13,818
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	2,200	500	437
Total Expenditure	543,200	506,500	436,307

Public Engagement	Department Original Budget 2014-15	Amended 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
Salaries	1,441,600	1,461,600	1,457,741
Employee Benefits	8,700	4,500	4,407
Travel & Communication	235,700	252,000	251,378
Supplies	32,900	22,700	20,047
Professional Services	0	0	0
Purchased Services	103,200	86,200	82,601
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	6,400	4,900	4,873
Grants	3,778,400	3,608,400	3,604,834
Revenue	-	-	(360,245)
Total Expenditure	5,606,900	5,440,300	5,065,636

Policy, Research, Evaluation and Corporate Services	Department Original Budget 2014-15	Amended 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
Salaries	462,800	372,800	361,698
Employee Benefits	2,700	700	656
Travel & Communication	76,800	26,800	5,477
Supplies	10,100	10,100	4,424
Professional Services	154,500	74,500	38,000
Purchased Services	38,400	38,400	15,519
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	2,100	100	0
Total Expenditure	747,400	523,400	425,774

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP)	Department Original Budget 2014-15	Amended 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
Salaries	377,100	302,100	291,593
Employee Benefits	2,100	2,100	1,604
Travel & Communication	124,900	45,900	45,177
Supplies	12,700	6,700	6,143
Professional Services	359,000	984,700	984,647
Purchased Services	16,500	123,100	121,436
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	9,000	1,000	0
Total Expenditure	901,300	1,465,600	1,450,600

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Title: Public Engagement in Newfoundland and Labrador

Outcome Statement:
Citizen and stakeholder participation is enhanced through innovative open government initiatives and best practices in public engagement

Focus Areas:
Open data
Open information
Dialogue
Collaboration

Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is:		
	addressed in the entity's activity plan	addressed in the entity's operational plan	addressed in the work plans of the entity
1. Open data	✓		
2. Open information	✓		
3. Dialogue	✓		
4. Collaboration	✓		

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